

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 0888

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EGEN, XM, PA, MX

SUBJECT: MEXICAN MINISTER DISCUSSES SELA WITH GOP

REF: MEXICO 1735

1. MEXICAN SECRETARY OF NATIONAL PATRIMONY, FRANCISCO JAVIER ALEJO LOPEZ, ARRIVED IN ASUNCION MARCH 5 FOR A VISIT OF A FEW HOURS TO DISCUSS THE MEXICAN/VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE TO CREATE A NEW LATIN AMERICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM (SELA). THE MEXICAN OFFICIAL WAS RECEIVED BY FOREIGN MINISTER SAPENA PASTOR BUT WAS UNABLE TO SEE PRESIDENT STROESSNER WHO WAS UNAVAILABLE. DR. ALEJO LOPEZ DEPARTED IN THE AFTERNOON FOR BUENOS AIRES AND RETURNED TO ASUNCION THE FOLLOWING MORNING, MARCH 6, FOR A BRIEF 8 AM AUDIENCE WITH PRESIDENT STROESSNER.

2. FOLLOWING HIS MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER,
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DR. ALEJO LOPEZ TALKED BRIEFLY WITH NEWSMEN. HE

SAID, "PRACTICALLY ALL THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN HAVE RECEIVED THE IDEA (THE CREATION OF SELA) WITH ENTHUSIASM; THEY SUPPORT IT AND AGREE THAT WE SHOULD GO FORWARD". HE SAID FURTHER THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD EXPRESSED HIS "SIMPATIA" CONCERNING THE CREATION OF SELA.

3. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM NEWSMEN, THE MEXICAN OFFICIAL STATED THAT SELA "WOULD NOT EXCLUDE THE U.S. AND CANADA, BUT HOWEVER WOULD BE A MECHANISM FOR WORK AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA -- AND THAT AMONG THESE ARE ALSO INCLUDED THE NATIONS OF BRITISH ORIGIN IN THE CARIBBEAN." "THESE COUNTRIES WANT TO BE CONSIDERED LATIN AMERICANS", HE SAID.

4. HOWEVER, IN A CONVERSATION FOLLOWING THE MEXICAN'S AUDIENCE WITH PRESIDENT STROESSNER, A SENIOR GOP OFFICIAL TOLD THE AMBASSADOR THAT DR. ALEJO LOPEZ IN RESPONSE TO GOP QUESTIONS HAD STATED THAT SELA WOULD INCLUDE THE UNITED STATES AND THUS WOULD NOT FORM A BLOC AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUESTIONS FROM THE AMBASSADOR, THE GOP OFFICIAL INSISTED THAT IT WAS HIS UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PROMOTERS OF SELA INTENDED TO INCLUDE THE U.S. WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION.

COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT THE MEXICAN OFFICIAL WAS DETERMINED TO PRESENT THE BEST POSSIBLE PICTURE OF SELA TO THE GOP AND CONSIDERED IT NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS UNUSUAL EXPLANATION REGARDING THE QUESTION OF U.S. PARTICIPATION TO ASSUAGE THE GOP'S CONCERN OVER JOINING ANY BLOC POSSIBLY DIRECTED AGAINST THE U.S.
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